

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

# SELECTIONS

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## A Brilliant Burst of Pop

written by Marwan Naaman



Catch the dazzling Tom Wesselmann retrospective in Manhattan.

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Tom Wesselmann is perhaps one of the world's most iconic pop artists. His work is often compared to that of Andy Warhol, with some critics even saying that Wesselmann represented pop art more succinctly than any of his contemporaries.

When the artist died in 2004, various art institutions staged shows of the artist's work, but over the past few years, Wesselmann seems to have gained a new popularity, a rebirth that's resulted in various exhibits of his work across museums in the United States and Canada.



This spring, and until May 28, Mitchell-Innes & Nash gallery is holding the first retrospective of the artist's work in New York since his death in 2004.

Wesselmann was best-known for his "Great American Nude" series, large-scale renderings of female bodies juxtaposed with still-life objects like Coke bottles. His bold, colorful works were fraught with controversy, some viewers even going so far as to accuse him of misogyny and of objectifying the female form. But Wesselmann was dismissive of such comments, as he was of the "pop artist" designation. In his eyes, his work was simply an extravagant celebration of exquisite colors and grand, generous shapes.

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The retrospective at Mitchell-Innes & Nash includes a dozen works that span the artist's career, beginning with "Great American Nude," created in 1961, to his final work, "Sunset Nudes," from 2004. Guests can view steel-cut works, which is a technique Wesselmann helped develop, as well as molded plastic paintings, an innovative technique that was borrowed from commercial signage.

"With this important exhibition, we hope to show how Wesselmann has filtered the canonical subjects of art – still life, the nude and the landscape – through a unique and personal lens using the media and technical innovation of the '60s, '70s and '80s, offering new possibilities for painting," says gallery co-founder Lucy Mitchell-Innes.

